Department of Government Efficiency

DOGE

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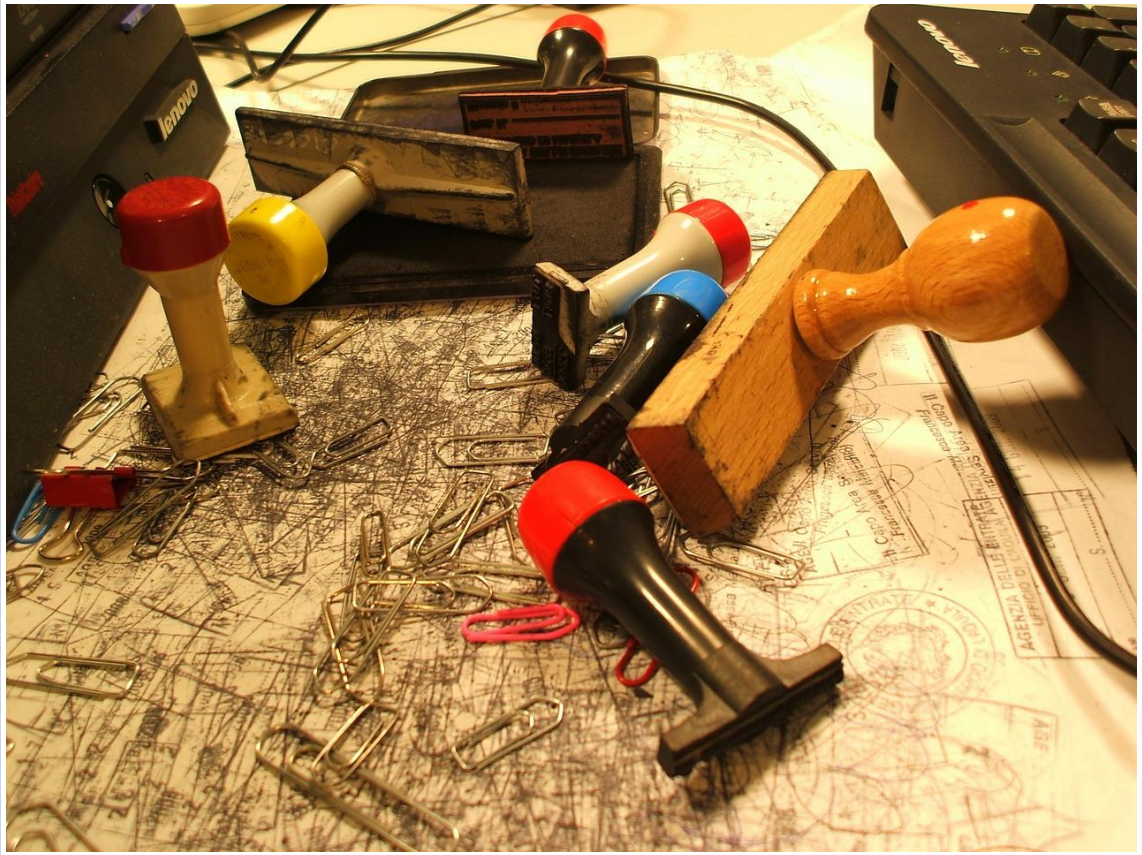

Department of Government Efficiency

Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) is a proposed presidential advisory commission in the United States. The title is the popularly used moniker of the concept and does not currently represent the official name of the commission. It is tasked with restructuring the federal government of the United States and removing regulations in order to reduce expenditures and increase government efficiency. Despite the name, DOGE is not planned to be a federal executive department, the creation of which would require the approval of the U.S. Congress.

The committee was announced by Donald Trump, the president-elect, in preparation for his second term as U.S. president. It will be led by the businessmen Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy.

The idea of DOGE has been linked to Trump's campaign promises to cut federal spending and reduce the size of government and the size of the federal fiscal deficit.
The concept of DOGE emerged in a discussion between Elon Musk and Donald Trump, where Musk floated the idea of a department for streamlining government efficiency.

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In August 2024, Trump said at a campaign event that, if he were elected, he would be open to giving Musk an advisory role. In response, Musk wrote a post on X saying "I am willing to serve", along with an AI-created image of him standing in front of a lectern marked "Department of Government Efficiency". The commission's acronym DOGE has been described as referencing dogecoin, a cryptocurrency that Musk promotes. Later, the suggestion was made by Trump of establishing such a department and for it to be headed by Musk.

Musk has suggested that the commission could help to cut the U.S. federal budget by up to US$2 trillion through measures such as reducing waste, abolishing redundant agencies, and downsizing the federal workforce. Ramaswamy also stated that DOGE may eliminate entire federal agencies and reduce the number of federal employees by as much as 75%. DOGE may attempt to do this through re-enacting Schedule. Musk has also proposed consolidating the number of federal agencies from more than 400 to fewer than 100.

Musk has described deregulation as the only path to the SpaceX Mars colonization program, and promised he will "get the government off people's back and out of their pocket“
This commission is similar to attempts before it, including president Theodore Roosevelt's Keep Commission, president Ronald Reagan's appointment of J. Peter Grace to lead the Grace Commission, and vice president Al Gore's National Partnership for Reinventing Government

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Despite its name, DOGE would not be a federal executive department, which would require an act of Congress to create, instead it will serve as an advisory body operating outside of government.[32] According to CBS News, it may operate under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.
Vox said that the body is "unlikely to have any regulatory teeth on its own, but there's little doubt that it can have influence on the incoming administration and how it will determine its budgets".

Donald Trump said the body would help to "dismantle government bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures and restructure federal agencies". He also stated that Musk and Ramaswamy will work with the Office of Management and Budget to address what he called "massive waste and fraud" in government spending.

On November 27, 2024, Musk proposed eliminating the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. On December 12, The Wall Street Journal reported that the Trump team and officials from DOGE had inquired about abolishing the FDIC. It also reported on several differing plans to combine and restructure the FDIC, OCC and Federal Reserve.

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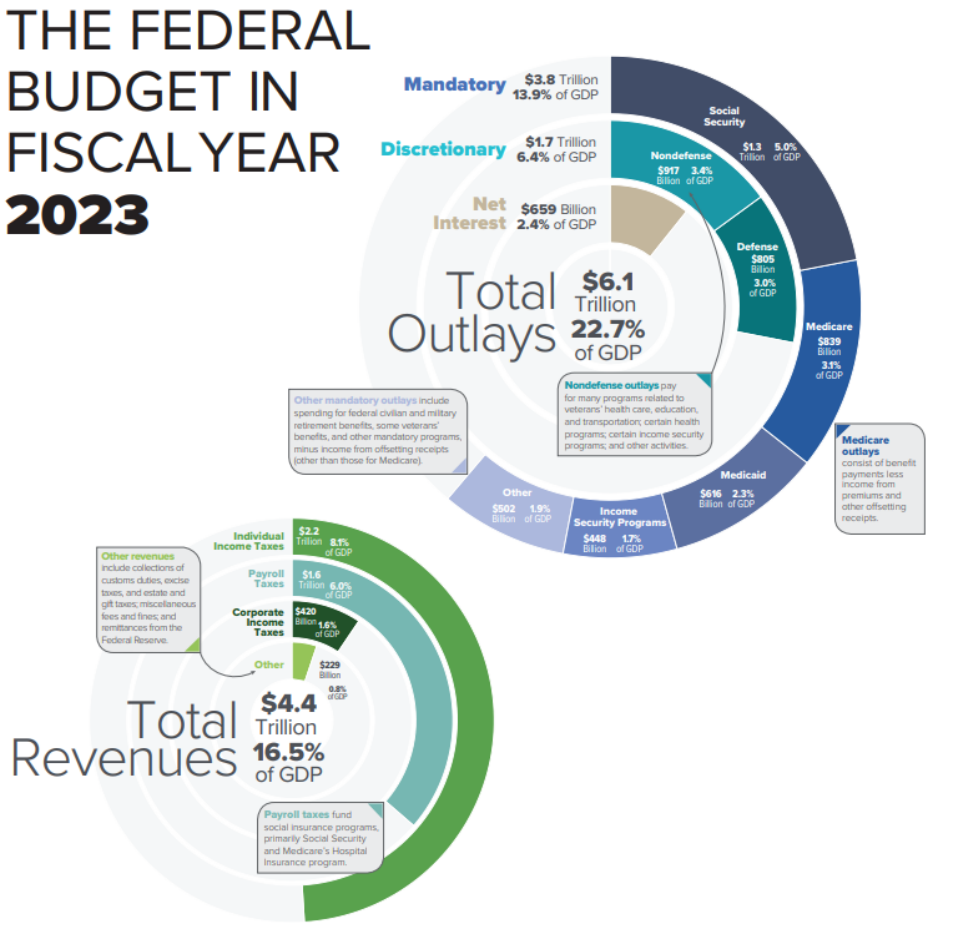
According to tweets by Musk and Ramaswamy, the ultimate goal of DOGE is to become so efficient that it eventually eliminates its own necessity. The commission has a set expiration date of July 4, 2026, the United States Semiquincentennial (250th anniversary), which follows Ramaswamy's idea that most government projects should have clear expiration dates.

Trump stated that the entity's work will "conclude" no later than July 4, 2026, also coinciding with a proposed "Great American Fair". Trump called the proposed results of DOGE "the perfect gift to America".


THE FEDERAL BUDGET IN FISCAL YEAR 2023
Mandatory $3.8 Trillion 13.9% of GDP
Discretionary $1.7 Trillion 6.4% of GDP
Net Interest $659 Billion 2.4% of GDP
Total Outlays $6.1 Trillion 22.7% of GDP
Social Security $1.3 Trillion 5.0% of GDP
Nondefense $917 Billion 3.4% of GDP
Defense $805 Billion 3.0% of GDP
Medicare $839 Billion 3.1% of GDP
Medicaid $616 Billion 2.3% of GDP
Income Security Programs $448 Billion 1.7% of GDP
Other $502 Billion 1.9% of GDP
Nondefense outlays pay for many programs related to veterans' health care, education, and transportation; certain health programs; certain income security programs; and other activities.
Other mandatory outlays include spending for federal civilian and military retirement benefits, some veterans' benefits, and other mandatory programs, minus income from offsetting receipts (other than those for Medicare).
Medicare outlays consist of benefit payments less income from premiums and other offsetting receipts.
Total Revenues $4.4 Trillion 16.5% of GDP
Individual Income Taxes $2.2 Trillion 8.1% of GDP
Payroll Taxes $1.6 Trillion 6.0% of GDP
Corporate Income Taxes $420 Billion 1.6% of GDP
Other $229 Billion 0.8% of GDP
Other revenues include collections of customs duties, excise taxes, and estate and gift taxes; miscellaneous fees and fines; and remittances from the Federal Reserve.
Payroll taxes fund social insurance programs, primarily Social Security and Medicare's Hospital Insurance program.

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United States Bureau of Efficiency

The United States Bureau of Efficiency was a bureau under the United States federal government from 1916 to 1933. The Woodrow Wilson administration established this bureau for creating efficiency ratings "for the classified service in the several executive departments in the District of Columbia". Prior to 1916, its efforts had been organized under the Division of Efficiency within the United States Civil Service Commission. The bureau was discontinued when Franklin D. Roosevelt assumed the presidency in 1933.

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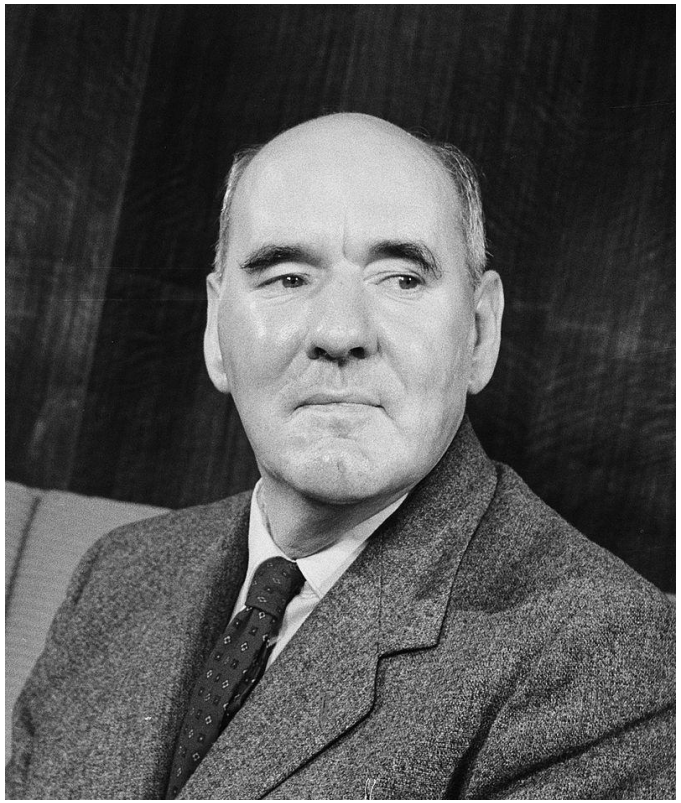
Parkinson's law

Parkinson's law can refer to either of two observations, published in 1955 by the naval historian C. Northcote Parkinson as an essay in The Economist:

"work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion",
the number of workers within public administration, bureaucracy or officialdom tends to grow, regardless of the amount of work to be done. This was attributed mainly to two factors: that officials want subordinates, not rivals, and that officials make work for each other.
The first paragraph of the essay mentioned the first meaning above as a "commonplace observation", and the rest of the essay was devoted to the latter observation, terming it "Parkinson's Law".



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Parkinson's law, which provides insight into a primary barrier to efficient time management, states that, "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion". This articulates a situation and an unexplained force that many have come to take for granted and accept. "In exactly the same way nobody bothered and nobody cared, before Newton's day, why an apple should drop to the ground when it might so easily fly up after leaving the tree," wrote Straits Times editor-in-chief, Allington Kennard, who continued, "There is less gravity in Professor Parkinson's Law, but hardly less truth."

Parkinson first published his law in a humorous satirical article in The Economist on 19 November 1955, meant as a critique on the efficiency of public administration and civil service bureaucracy, and the continually rising headcount, and related cost, attached to these. That article noted that, "Politicians and taxpayers have assumed (with occasional phases of doubt) that a rising total in the number of civil servants must reflect a growing volume of work to be done." The law examined two sub-laws, The Law of Multiplication of Subordinates, and The Law of Multiplication of Work, and provided 'scientific proof' of the validity of these, including mathematical formulae.

Two years later, the law was revisited when Parkinson's new books, Parkinson's Law And Other Studies in Administration and Parkinson's Law: Or The Pursuit of Progress[9] were published in 1957.

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In Singapore, where he was teaching at the time, this began a series of talks where he addressed diverse audiences in person, in print, and over the airwaves on 'Parkinson's Law'. For example, on 16 October 1957, at 10 a.m., he spoke on this at the International Women's Club programme talk held at the Y.W.C.A. at Raffles Quay. The advent of his new book as well as an interview during his debut talk was covered in an editorial in The Straits Times shortly after, entitled, "A professor's cocktail party secret: They arrive half an hour late and rotate." Time, which also wrote about the book, noted that its theme was "a delightfully unprofessional diagnosis of the widespread 20th century malady — galloping orgmanship." Orgmanship, according to Parkinson, was "the tendency of all administrative departments to increase the number of subordinate staff, irrespective of the amount of work (if any) to be done", as noted by The Straits Times. Parkinson, it was reported, wanted to trace the illegibility of signatures, the attempt being made to fix the point in a successful executive career at which the handwriting becomes meaningless, even to the executive himself.

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Straits Times editor-in-chief Allington Kennard's editorial, "Twice the staff for half the work", in mid-April 1958, touched on further aspects or sub-laws, like Parkinson's Law of Triviality, and also other interesting, if dangerous areas, like "the problem of the retirement age, how not to pay Singapore income tax when a millionaire, the point of vanishing interest in high finance, how to get rid of the company chairman," etc. The author supported Parkinson's Law of Triviality — which states that, "The time spent on any item of an agenda is in inverse proportion to the sum involved," with a local example where it took the Singapore City Council "six hours to pick a new man for the gasworks and two and a half minutes to approve a $100 million budget." It is possible that the book, humorous though it is, may have touched a raw nerve among the administration at that time. As J. D. Scott, in his review of Parkinson's book two weeks later, notes, "Of course, Parkinson's Law, like all satire, is serious — it wouldn't be so comic if it weren't — and because it is serious there will be some annoyance and even dismay under the smiles. His celebrity did not remain local. Parkinson travelled to England, arriving there aboard the P&O Canton, in early June 1958, as reported by Reuters, and made the front page of The Straits Times on 9 June. Reporting from London on Saturday 14 June 1958, Hall Romney wrote, "Prof. C. N. Parkinson of the University of Malaya, whose book, Parkinson's Law has sold more than 80,000 copies, has had a good deal of publicity since he arrived in England in the Canton.

Parkinson's law

The first-referenced meaning of the law – "Work expands to fill the available time" – has sprouted several corollaries, the best known being the Stock-Sanford corollary to Parkinson's law:

If you wait until the last minute, it only takes a minute to do.

Other corollaries include Horstman's corollary to Parkinson's law, coined by Mark Horstman of website manager-tools.com:

Work contracts to fit in the time we give it.

the Asimov corollary to Parkinson's law:

In ten hours a day you have time to fall twice as far behind your commitments as in five hours a day.

as well as corollaries relating to computers, such as:

Data expands to fill the space available for storage

Parkinson's law

The law can be generalized further as:

The demand upon a resource tends to expand to match the supply of the resource (If the price is zero).

An extension is often added:

The reverse is not true.

This generalization has come to resemble what some economists regard as the law of demand – namely, the lower the price of a service or commodity, the greater the quantity demanded. This is also referred to as induced demand.

Second meaning
This was the main focus of the essay by Cyril Northcote Parkinson, published in The Economist in 1955, and reprinted with other similar essays in the successful 1958 book Parkinson's Law: The Pursuit of Progress. The book was translated into many languages. It was highly popular in the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence. In 1986, Alessandro Natta complained about the swelling bureaucracy in Italy. Mikhail Gorbachev responded that "Parkinson's law works everywhere."

Parkinson derived the dictum from his extensive experience in the British Civil Service. He gave, as examples, the growth in the size of the British Admiralty and Colonial Office even though the numbers of their ships and colonies were declining.

Much of the essay is dedicated to a summary of purportedly scientific observations supporting the law, such as the increase in the number of employees at the Colonial Office while the British Empire declined (he showed that it had its greatest number of staff when it was folded into the Foreign Office due to a lack of colonies to administer). He explained this growth using two forces: "An official wants to multiply subordinates, not rivals", and "Officials make work for each other." He noted that the number employed in a bureaucracy rose by 5–7% per year "irrespective of any variation in the amount of work (if any) to be done".

Parkinson presented the growth as a mathematical equation describing the rate at which bureaucracies expand over time, with the formula

$$\frac{X = (2km+P)}{n}$$

x – number of new employees to be hired annually
k – number of employees who want to be promoted by hiring new employees
m – number of working hours per person for the preparation of internal memoranda (micropolitics)
P – difference: age at hiring − age at retirement
n – number of administrative files actually completed

{\displaystyle x=(2k^{m}+P)/n}, in which k was the number of officials wanting subordinates, m was the hours they spent writing minutes to each other.

Observing that the promotion of employees necessitated the hiring of subordinates, and that time used answering minutes requires more work; Parkinson states: "In any public administrative department not actually at war the staff increase may be expected to follow this formula" (for a given year)

In a different essay included in the book, Parkinson proposed a rule about the efficiency of administrative councils. He defined a "coefficient of inefficiency" with the number of members as the main determining variable. This is a semi-humorous attempt to define the size at which a committee or other decision-making body becomes completely inefficient.

In Parkinson's Law: The Pursuit of Progress, London: John Murray, 1958 a chapter is devoted to the basic question of what he called comitology: how committees, government cabinets, and other such bodies are created and eventually grow irrelevant (or are initially designed as such). (The word comitology has recently been independently invented by the European Union for a different non-humorous meaning.)

Ministry of Silly Walks

Parkinson's law

The accompanying table is derived from Admiralty statistics for 1914 and 1928. The criticism voiced at the time centered on the comparison between the sharp fall in numbers of those available for fighting and the sharp rise in those available only for administration, the creation, it was said, of "a magnificent Navy on land." But that comparison is not to the present purpose. What we have to note is that the 2,000 Admiralty officials of 1914 had become the 3,569 of 1928; and that this growth was unrelated to any possible increase in their work. The Navy during that period had diminished, in point of fact, by a third in men and two-thirds in ships. Nor, from 1922 onwards, was its strength even expected to increase, for its total of ships (unlike its total of officials) was limited by the Washington Naval Agreement of that year. Yet in these circumstances we had a 78.45 percent increase in Admiralty officials over a period of fourteen years; an average increase of 5.6 percent a year on the earlier total. In fact, as we shall see, the rate of increase was not as regular as that. All we have to consider, at this stage, is the percentage rise over a given period.

ADMIRALTY STATISTICS

	1914	1928	Percentage increase or decrease
Capital ships in commission	62	20	-67.74
Officers and men in Royal Navy	146,000	100,000	-31.50
Dockyard workers	57,000	62,439	+ 9.54
Dockyard officials and clerks	3,249	4,558	+40.28
Admiralty officials	2,000	3,569	+78.45

Can this rise in the total number of civil servants be accounted for except on the assumption that such a total must always rise by a law governing its growth? It might be urged, at this point, that the period under discussion was one of rapid development in naval technique. The use of the flying machine was no longer confined to the eccentric. Submarines were tolerated if not approved. Engineer officers were beginning to be regarded as almost human. In so revolutionary an age we might expect the storekeepers would have more elaborate inventories to compile. We might not wonder to see more draughtsmen on the payroll, more designers, more technicians and scientists. But these, the dockyard officials, increased only by 40 percent in number, while the men of Whitehall increased by nearly 80 percent. For every new foreman or electrical engineer at Portsmouth there had to be two or more clerks at Charing Cross. From this we might be tempted to conclude, provisionally, that the rate of increase in administrative staff is likely to be double that of the technical staff at a time when the actually useful strength (in this case, of seamen) is being reduced by 31.5 percent. It has been proved, however, statistically, that this last percentage is irrelevant. The Officials would have multiplied at the same rate had there been no actual seamen at all.

It would be interesting to follow the further progress by which the 8,118 Admiralty staff of 1935 came to number 33,788 by 1954. But the staff of the Colonial Office affords a better field of study during a period of Imperial decline. The relevant statistics are set down below. Before showing what the rate of increase is, we must observe that the extent of this department's responsibilities was far from constant during these twenty years. The colonial territories were not much altered in area or population between1935 and 1939. They were considerably diminished by 1943, certain areas being in enemy hands. They were increased again in 1947, but have since then shrunk steadily from year to year as successive colonies achieve self-government.

Empirical evidence is drawn from historical and contemporary government cabinets. Most often, the minimal size of a state's most powerful and prestigious body is five members. From English history, Parkinson notes a number of bodies that lost power as they grew:

The first cabinet was the Council of the Crown, now the House of Lords, which grew from an unknown number to 29, to 50 before 1600, by which time it had lost much of its power.
A new body was appointed in 1257, the "Lords of the King's Council", numbering fewer than 10. The body grew, and ceased to meet when it had 172 members.
The third incarnation was the Privy Council, initially also numbering fewer than 10 members, rising to 47 in 1679.
In 1715, the Privy Council lost power to the Cabinet Council with eight members, rising to 20 by 1725.
Around 1740, the Cabinet Council was superseded by an inner group, called the Cabinet, initially with five members. At the time of Parkinson's study (the 1950s), the Cabinet was still the official governing body. Parkinson observed that, from 1939 on, there was an effort to save the Cabinet as an institution. The membership had been fluctuating from a high of 23 members in 1939, down to 18 in 1954.
A detailed mathematical expression is proposed by Parkinson for the coefficient of inefficiency, featuring many possible influences. In 2008, an attempt was made to empirically verify the proposed model. Parkinson's conjecture that membership exceeding a number "between 19.9 and 22.4" makes a committee manifestly inefficient seems well justified by the evidence proposed[citation needed].
Less certain is the optimal number of members, which must lie between three (a logical minimum) and 20. (Within a group of 20, individual discussions may occur, diluting the power of the leader.)
That it may be eight seems arguable but is not supported by observation: no contemporary government in Parkinson's data set had eight members, and only king Charles I of England had a Committee of State of that size.

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Public administration is both an academic discipline and a field of practice; the latter is depicted in this picture of U.S. federal public servants at a meeting.

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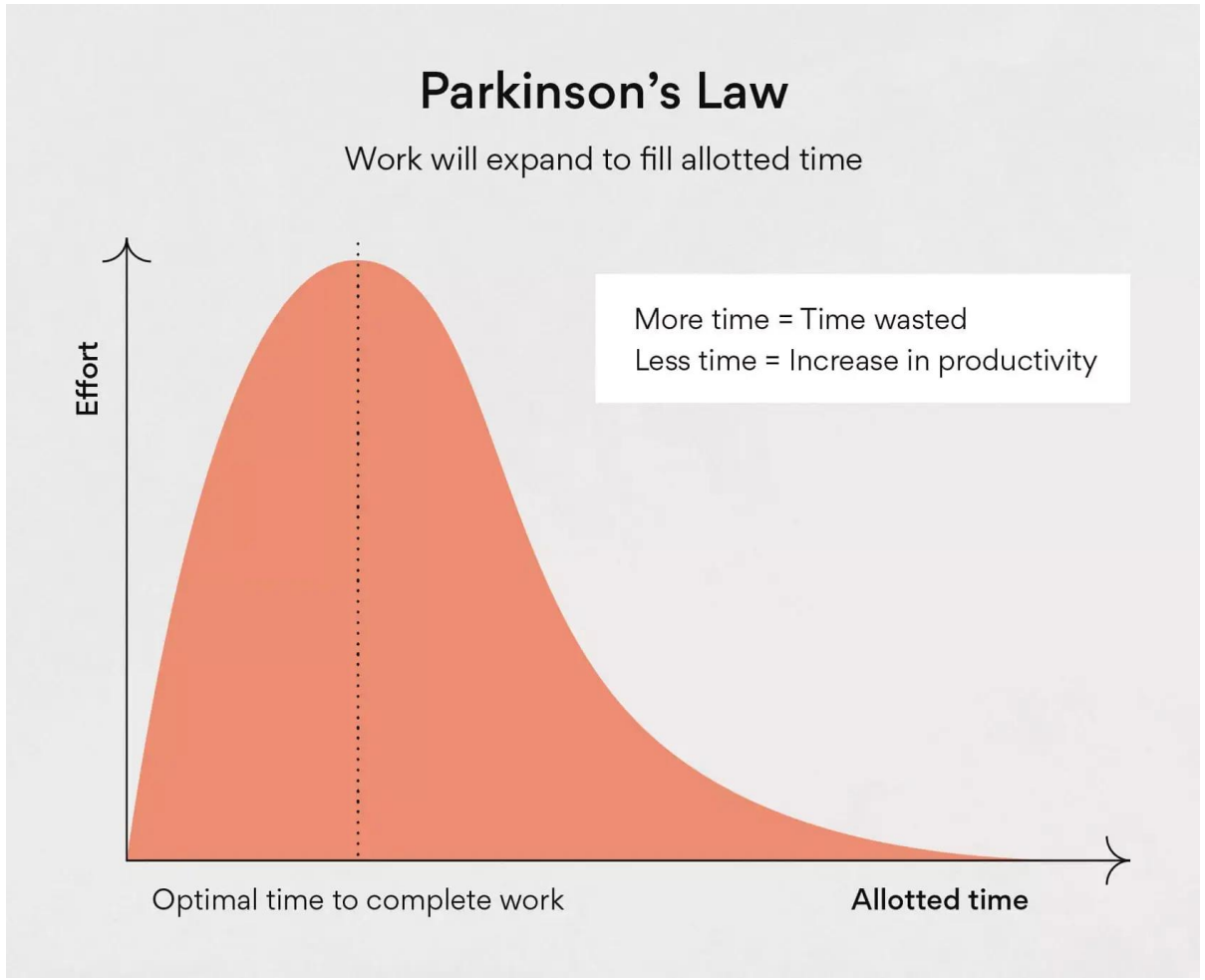
Parkinson's Law
Work will expand to fill allotted time
Effort
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Less time = Increase in productivity
Optimal time to complete work
Allotted time

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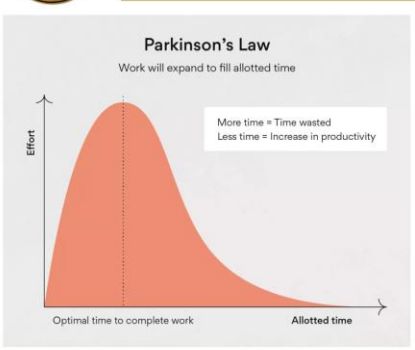
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